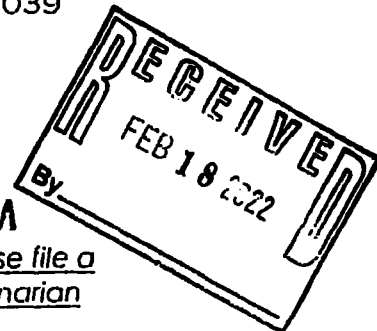


ARIZONA STATE VETERINARY MEDICAL EXAMINING BOARD

1740 W. ADAMS ST., SUITE 4600, PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85007

PHONE (602) 364-1PET (1738) FAX (602) 364-1039

VETBOARD.AZ.GOV



COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION FORM

If there is an issue with more than one veterinarian please file a separate Complaint Investigation Form for each veterinarian

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Received: 2/10/22

Case Number: 22-92

A. THIS COMPLAINT IS FILED AGAINST THE FOLLOWING:

Name of Veterinarian/CVT: DVM Randy Aronson

Premise Name: PAWS Veterinary Center

Premise Address: _____

City: Tucson State: AZ Zip Code: 85716

Telephone: _____

B. INFORMATION REGARDING THE INDIVIDUAL FILING COMPLAINT*:

Name: Rachel M. Reitz

Address: [REDACTED]

City: [REDACTED] State: [REDACTED] Zip Code: [REDACTED]

Home Telephone: _____ Cell Telephone: [REDACTED]

*STATE LAW REQUIRES WE HAVE TO DISCLOSE YOUR NAME UNLESS WE CAN SHOW THAT DISCLOSURE WILL RESULT IN SUBSTANTIAL HARM TO YOU, SOMEONE ELSE OR THE PUBLIC PER A.R.S. § 41-1010. IF YOU HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT SUBSTANTIAL HARM WILL RESULT IN DISCLOSURE OF YOUR NAME PLEASE PROVIDE COPIES OF RESTRAINING ORDERS OR OTHER DOCUMENTATION.

C. PATIENT INFORMATION (1):

Name: Fred

Breed/Species: Unknown Mixed Breed - Rescued from PACC 2012

Age: 10 Sex: male Color: grey, white, brown

PATIENT INFORMATION (2):

Name: _____

Breed/Species: _____

Age: _____ Sex: _____ Color: _____

D. VETERINARIANS WHO HAVE PROVIDED CARE TO THIS PET FOR THIS ISSUE:

Please provide the name, address and phone number for each veterinarian.

Present to past:

Desert Mobile Paws- became primary care Spring 2020. Dr Cameron

Desert Mobile Paws - End of life Dr. Aimee Roden (then fred survived) Aimee

Roden is now called "Paw Prints" I will use her for end of life when the time comes.

Loyal Companion: Orthotic prescriptions

PAWS Vet Center - acupuncture and adaquan treatment 12/19- present

Arizona Vetrinary Oncology - Radiation treatment Dr. Bosh Fall 2019

E. WITNESS INFORMATION:

Please provide the name, address and phone number of each witness that has direct knowledge regarding this case.

Sami - Vetrinarian Tech in the office at the time of incident.

Sarah Vet - Tech manager - spoke with me after.

Attestation of Person Requesting Investigation

By signing this form, I declare that the information contained herein is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. Further, I authorize the release of any and all medical records or information necessary to complete the investigation of this case.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

21 18 / 2021

Fred's Vet Care from Past to present

Mobile Paws- became primary care Spring 2020. Dr Cameron next appointment 2/21

Loyal Companion: ongoing orthotic prescriptions - referred by Dr. Aimee

Desert Mobile Paws - End of life Dr. Aimee Roden (then Fred survived) then Aimee became primary care until she left practice. Aimee Roden is now called "Paw Prints" . I will use her for the end of life when the time comes.

PAWS Vet Center - cancer care consultation post radiation & acupuncture and adequate treatment 12/19- present

Arizona Veterinary Oncology - Radiation treatment Dr. Bosh Fall 2019

University Pet Clinic - primary care until cancer diagnosis 10-2019 Freds Emergency vet until cancer diagnoses **Pima Pet Clinic** 12-2019

Freds present care & complaint included (complaints underlined below)

Fred is a canine with a history of chondrosarcoma of the ischium. It is remarkable that with radiation he has survived and with the support of orthotics Fred has maintained good health until his recent infection which is related to the incident/complaint described below.

8/16/2021 Fred's last routine exam was 8/16/2021- Bloodwork health was perfect. Received prescription for soft orthotic device refill obtained from Loyal Companion.

12/13/2021 Exam done at Desert Paws for growths on back right paw. Review of possible future removal.

The incident leading up to complaint: On 12/26/2022 Fred (my dog) began favoring his front right paw and was upset when I touched it. Being that it was the holiday weekend I contacted VCA emergency (closest to my new home - I moved in 12/17) and they allowed me to come in. X-rays were taken. They thought Fred had a sprain and he was given carprofen. 1/11/2022 Freds injury took a turn for the worse and he couldn't put weight on his front paw (this was not good given that he uses an orthotic on the back leg - same side) and the toe was swollen and red. I tried to get in with Desert Paws but they were booking appointments far out due to demand. Rather than going back to emergency I went to PAWS center (Fred had been seen there multiple times) since they had an opening the next day. Fred needed adequate refills (which I only obtained from there) and I was also considering consulting with Dr. Aronson regarding a new orthotic for Freds back leg and interested in receiving more adequate.

1/12/2022 Appointment at PAWS took place & x rays were taken. It was determined that Fred had an infection but unknown whether it was a bone infection. I was sent home antibiotics and they said I could "stop in" after two weeks to get x-rays to see if things were better. No appointment necessary. The Orthotic was discussed and Dr. Aronson suggested we consult with Dr. McCally since he was the once prescribing vet for this orthotic and Dr. Aronson had been working with him while he built his practice. Adequate was also discussed.

*I would like to note that when I spoke with Dr. Aronson used Loyal Companion (Kate Tidus) previously for his current orthotic. He spoke very negatively about Kate from Loyal Companion. He said she had no business being in the business. It was uncomfortable to hear that.

1/20/2022 Casting and consultation with Dr. McCalley regarding orthotic and adequan was picked up.

1/26/2022 Fred's foot became enlarged / red again and he was having trouble walking again. PAWS and DESERT PAWS were closed when I discovered the issue so I went back to VCA emergency due to availability and concern for my pets' issue not going away. VCA retook x-rays and then did a swab to test for the bacteria. I was sent home with an antibiotic. I was called back because they needed to retake the x-ray. Then swab results came back. Fred needed to switch to a different antibiotic. I was then sent home with a 14 day prescription of another antibiotic. I was told he needed to get an x-ray after 14 days. All medical documentation was forwarded to PAWS since Aronson had seen him before for this issue. I honestly didn't think Fred's foot infection would continue on as long as it did. I reached out to PAWS to schedule the 14 day follow up x rays. I spoke with PAWS front office staff on the phone and texted about it. The x-rays were scheduled for 2/16 at 2:30.

2/16 in the morning (day of appointment) I called PAWS to see if there was any way I could move the appointment to a later time because something came up at the school I work at but they said Dr. Aronson had to leave by 3:00. They also said I wouldn't be able to get in with him for a few weeks if I didn't come that day. So I ended up taking a half day off from work.

I arrived at the appointment at 2:30. I was taken into the office and the vet tech was very confused about the care that Fred had had at VCA since the last appointment on 1/12. She couldn't find the documents. I explained that I had sent them two weeks ago from VCA. She seemed rushed and stressed. She left the office. She came back and said they found them and had them printed. Dr. Aronson came in right after at about 2:45 with those printed documents. I explained everything that had transpired since our last visit and the different antibiotics and culture and that the recommendation was for an x-ray and that was why I was there.. Dr. Aronson seemed to be learning this information for the first time. With the VCA papers in his hand frustratingly he said "The radiologist over there didn't even seem like he wanted to read this x-ray". I was very confused by this comment. He said well we are just going to put him on another 14 days of antibiotics. I was very confused because I had come there for an x-ray. I said "really.. I just took a half day for the x-ray. VCA had offered me a second round of antibiotics" Dr. Aronson did not like this comment as he became angry and said I "didn't trust him". I saw his anger and I said "Oh no i'm sorry i'm not upset i'm just confused" He tossed Fred's paperwork at me and told his vet tech you know what don't don't charge her for my visit. He then got up and got even more angry. I told him again I was really not upset. Then he told me that "no no as he walked backwards and that I was hard to work" and other people in his office have said "that i'm hard to work with too". I immediately burst into tears and looked up and he was gone. His Vet tech Sami looked at me in shock. She said I don't know what just happened and she felt unfomcortbale and she said she needed to leave the room. I was in shock and felt terrible and couldn't stop crying. I really was just so confused based on the recommendations and the appointment being scheduled for an x-ray. He probably could have talked me through it.. Dr Aronson left Paws and never came to talk to me as I was still crying and confused in their office.

I went out of the office to another office room still crying and I asked for the office manager as I was trying to calm down. She came in .. I asked if I had caused them problems in the past and if they found me hard to work with and told them I was so sorry if I had. I reviewed all my experiences there with them and I couldn't think of anything challenging for them.

Dr. Aronson's anger and behavior towards me was very aggressive and it was very upsetting. I couldn't believe he just walked out of our appointment and left. I explained this to the office manager .. Her answer was that "Fred was just a difficult case" and that's all she can think of. She kept repeating that Fred was just a difficult case over and over. Her answer sent me into even more tears as Fred was just sitting there happy. None of it made sense. I was able to catch my breath. I went to the front to get the clavamox he recommended but noticed it was \$275 in comparison to \$100 at VCA. I said to the office staff I am truly sorry if this is another problem for you but I think I'll get it at VCA. I asked the front staff if I had been challenging them. She said "I have never had any problems with you"

Witness staff: Sami Vet tech and Sarah Office Manager

I am still so very upset with what happened. My number one concern was the care of Fred infection. Instead I believe this was an attack on me. I really had positive experiences with PAWS until this situation. It is still very confusing what happened.

I have worked with the office staff and I informed them that I will no longer go there for care and will pick up Fred's orthotics when it is ready. And schedule with Dr. McCalley or Kate Tidus for a follow up once I receive it.

I have a follow up for Fred at Desert Paws Mobile with Dr. Cameron on Monday 2/21. VCA was able to give me a second round of antibiotics just in case.

Response to Complaint #22-92 from Rachel Reitz

I will respond to Rachel Reitz's allegations leveled against me. Still, I would like to summarize this incident as an angry client because I let her go due to the amount of work involved in making her happy and the lack of appreciation for that effort.

We initially saw Fred for his swollen digit. We have patiently and tirelessly worked on the Chondrosarcoma of his hip, neuritis, proprioceptive deficits, and associated rehabilitation to make him comfortable. An ER saw the digit, and she received Carprofen. She felt the toe was still swollen, and she requested an exam. We provided a work-in exam before my usually scheduled appointments on 1/12/22. On physical exam, P-5 of the RF paw was swollen and painful. We discussed nail bed injury, but we recommended radiographs of that digit due to the heat, inflammation, and pain. The radiographic interpretation yielded, "Moderate focal soft tissue swelling, fifth digit, right manus. Suspected aggressive focal changes, distal phalanx, fifth digit, right manus". Looking at a diagnosis of osteomyelitis and potentially malignant neoplasia, Rachel decided to take a conservative approach. We initiated Enrofloxacin therapy, an excellent broad-spectrum antibiotic and concentrated Epsom salts soaks, twice daily to function as a phlogistic agent and reduce inflammation.

A call back the next day indicated that Fred was walking better.

In the meantime, we had at least 10-15 steps involved in trying to help Rachel get a casting of Fred's hind leg with Dr. McCally for Ortho-Pets. We provided this service without any compensation, even though there were multiple calls to Dr. McCally, the orthopedic manufacturer in Canada, and Ms. Reitz. We provided all of the visits with Dr. McCally at PAWS Veterinary Center pro bono.

On February 15th Rachel had called the office to inquire about a follow-up appointment and radiographs. We added her to our schedule before the regularly confirmed appointments to assess Fred's toe, and she then canceled that appointment. She then called back later that morning, and we again worked her into our hectic schedule at the end of the afternoon.

The History read: 'Owner reports that Fred went to ER at the end of January when he went off the first round of antibiotics. They gave him a different antibiotic and did a culture with radiographs. The owner feels the toe is better and wants to know what to do next.'

The physical exam of the musculoskeletal system showed that Fred was ambulatory x4, normal gait, normal range of motion, P-5 digit of the right foot looks totally normal. There is no pain, heat, or inflammation present.

I was highly pleased that Fred's toe had looked so normal as I was very concerned that he might have an aggressive lesion in the third phalanx of P-5. From the plan of the clinical record, 'I recommended no radiographs at that time since the toe is definitely responding to the current

RECEIVED

MAR 16 2022

Initial: 

Clavamox routine. We recommend doing follow-up radiographs if the toe begins to bother Fred, look swollen or inflamed.'

Rachel then promptly responded to my recommendations by saying, 'Oh great, I can't believe I had to take time off of work since you are not going to take x-rays!' I was utterly dumbfounded as I had just been very pleased that toe was doing so well and that just another round of antibiotics should be considered as a safety measure. I also thought Rachel would have been thrilled we avoided a cancer situation and the expense of the x-rays at this time.

I reacted to this statement by taking the records I was holding and placing them on the exam table before me, saying, "We are done here." I did not raise my voice or do anything condescending to Ms. Reitz, only obviously, showed my displeasure in her response and actions. I instructed my technician not to charge Rachel for this examination and visit. I told her that she had been challenging to work with, and we tried to make every request she ever made into a workable solution, including the myriad of steps to make Fred's orthotic. I promptly left the room.

My technician and Sarah Smith came into my office explaining that Ms. Reitz was crying and had trouble composing herself. I thanked her for trying to console her but said that I was not willing to see her in the future due to her lack of respect for my veterinary prowess and time.

This is an additional note after Sarah reviewed my response that I feel is pertinent:

She did contact desert paws about making the cast orthotic, and they declined; there's a lengthy email on their records from Lisa Cawood explaining why it was difficult and beyond their scope and offering her options and a surgery referral, which she declined. Hayley and I also told her the same and recommended a surgeon visit, and she refused, so we agreed to special order the material and work with McCally to try to do it here, which led to the many steps you listed. From my chair, she has always been demanding and does not respect our boundaries which is why our team all have difficulty working with her. We hid this from her well and provided excellent client service and medical care. When we could no longer deal with it, and she continued to be demanding and unappreciative, this situation transpired.

Sarah Smith, CVT & Practice Manager

Douglas A. Ducey
- Governor -



Victoria Whitmore
- Executive Director -

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INVESTIGATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

TO: Arizona State Veterinary Medical Examining Board

FROM: PM Investigative Committee: Adam Almaraz - Chair
Amrit Rai, DVM
Robert Kritsbert, DVM
Gregg Maura
Justin McCormick, DVM -**Absent**

STAFF PRESENT: Tracy A. Riendeau, CVT – Investigations
Marc Harris, Assistant Attorney General

RE: Case: 22-92

Complainant(s): Rachel Reitz

Respondent(s): Randy Aronson, VMD (License: 1407)

SUMMARY:

Complaint Received at Board Office: 2/18/22

Committee Discussion: 7/12/22

Board IIR: 8/17/22

APPLICABLE STATUTES AND RULES:

Laws as Amended August 2018

(Lime Green); Rules as Revised

September 2013 (Yellow)

On February 15, 2022, "Fred," a male mixed breed dog was presented to Respondent for a recheck. The dog was examined; Respondent recommended another course of antibiotics and no radiographs at that time. Complainant commented that she took the afternoon off of work as she was thought radiographs were needed. At that time, Respondent elected to terminate Complainant as a client as he felt she was difficult to work with and did not respect his services and time.

Complainant was noticed and appeared telephonically.

Respondent was noticed and was available telephonically. The Committee did not have questions for Respondent.

The Committee reviewed medical records, testimony, and other documentation as described below:

- Complainant(s) narrative: *Rachel Reitz*
- Respondent(s) narrative/medical record: *Randy Aronson, VMD*
- Consulting Veterinarian(s) narrative/medical records: *Kimberly Olson, DVM*

PROPOSED 'FINDINGS of FACT':

1. On January 12, 2022, the dog was presented to Respondent for a swollen digit. The dog had been seen at an emergency facility on December 26, 2021 – radiographs were performed and nothing abnormal was identified. Respondent examined the dog and found that P-5 of the right front paw was swollen and painful. They discussed nail bed injury, but radiographs were recommended due to the amount of inflammation and pain. Aggressive focal changes were suspected; Complainant wanted to take a conservative approach and Enrofloxacin was recommended as well as Espom salt soaks twice daily.
2. Respondent had seen the dog in the past for other complex issues.
3. On January 26, 2022, the dog was seen at an emergency facility for discharge from P-5 and the dog vocalizing. After evaluation, Dr. Aarrestad recommended repeating radiographs, culturing the toe and clip and clean the area. There was a concern of mild periosteal reaction of the digit – Complainant declined sending the radiographs out for interpretation. The dog was discharged with cephalexin and carprofen.
4. On January 28, 2022, due to the poor quality of the radiographs, the emergency facility asked Complainant to return and retake the radiographs. Those were submitted for interpretation from a radiologist. There was a soft tissue swelling of the right forelimb 5th digit, along with a change to the appearance of the ungual process of the distal phalanx that may represent chronic inflammation or infection.
5. On February 3, 2022, the culture results were reported to Complainant and Clavamox and Provable was dispensed. It was recommended to have repeat radiographs performed and possibly refill the Clavamox at the primary care provider.
6. On February 15, 2022, the dog was presented to the Respondent. After evaluation, Respondent did not feel radiographs were warranted at that time and recommended refilling the Clavamox. The toe looked normal with no inflammation, heat or pain. Respondent recommended repeating the radiographs if the toe began to bother the dog or look swollen or inflamed.
7. Complainant commented to Respondent that she had expected radiographs were going to be performed and had taken time off work. Respondent reacted by taking the records he had in his hand and setting them on the exam table – he instructed his technician to not charge Complainant for the exam or visit. Respondent told Complainant that she had been challenging to work with and they tried to make every request she made into a workable solution, including the myriad of steps to make the dog's orthotic. Respondent left the room.
8. According to Complainant, Respondent tossed the paperwork he had in his hands at her before letting her know she was difficult and terminating her as a client.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION:

The Committee discussed that they felt Respondent and his staff put much time and effort into accommodating Complainant. Respondent chose to terminate the relationship once they felt they could no longer assist her to her expectations.

COMMITTEE'S PROPOSED CONCLUSIONS of LAW:

The Committee concluded that no violations of the Veterinary Practice Act occurred.

COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION:

Motion: It was moved and seconded the Board:

Dismiss this issue with no violation.

Vote: The motion was approved with a vote of 4 to 0.

The information contained in this report was obtained from the case file, which includes the complaint, the respondent's response, any consulting veterinarian or witness input, and any other sources used to gather information for the investigation.

TR

Tracy A. Riendeau, CVT
Investigative Division